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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

DATE: December 21, 2006

TO: School Food Authorities (SFAs)

FROM: Christine Emerson, School Nutrition Programs Director

SUBJECT: New Civil Rights Guidance

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has released a revised version of the Special Nutrition Programs Guidance for FNS Civil Rights Instruction 113-1. The guidance addresses civil rights requirements in the School Nutrition Programs (SNPs) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The guidance includes a question and answer section that addresses all programs.

Here are the changes and highlights that School Food Authorities must be aware of.

- **SFAs must provide training to "frontline" staff who work directly with program applicants and participants on an annual basis.** The training must include (but is not limited to):
 - Collection and use of data;
 - Effective public notification systems;
 - Complaint procedures;
 - Compliance review techniques;
 - Resolution of noncompliance;
 - Requirements for reasonable accommodation of persons with disabilities;
 - Requirements for language assistance;
 - Conflict resolution, and
 - Customer service.

The state agency will make a presentation available to Montana schools for use in meeting this training requirement. Notification will be sent when this training is available.

- SFAs must make public notification that they participate in the School Nutrition Programs and/or Summer Food Service Program. *The public notice that is required is available at www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html.*
- SFAs must include the non-discrimination statement in full on all program materials regarding the School Nutrition Programs. The non-discrimination statement is as follows:
"In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800) 795-3272 (voice) or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

"It is the mission of the Office of Public Instruction to improve teaching and learning through communication, collaboration, advocacy, and accountability to those we serve."

- SFAs must display the "And Justice For All" poster where all program participants can read it. *New USDA posters are currently being printed to reflect the correct telephone numbers and address. SFAs will be notified when they are available.*
- SFAs must fill out and maintain on file the "Civil Rights Self-Evaluation" provided by the state agency, including racial and ethnic data. This self-review is due by October 31 of each school year and is available at www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html.
- SFAs must have a system for dealing with complaints, and all complaints must be reported to the state agency in a timely manner.

The full guidance is available on the School Nutrition Programs Web site:
www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/index.html, click on "Lunch, Breakfast, Snacks and Milk" and scroll down to "Civil Rights."

If you have any questions, please contact School Nutrition Programs at (406) 444-2501.